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INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION
CALLING ON THE SYRIAN OPPOSITION COALITION TO OUTLINE
PLAN FOR INCLUSION OF MINORITIES

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 17, 2013

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, the horror unleashed by the regime of Bashar al Assad in Syria has caused tremendous suffering, displacement and death. Tragically, this conflict may endure for months to come. Assad has lost legitimacy with his own people and with the world, but he retains the military capacity to keep fighting. The fact that he retains chemical weapons and, as the Administration has averred, may have already used them on the battlefield, raises new concerns about the toll this conflict may yet take.

Mr. Speaker, we all are aware of the delicate mix of religious and cultural diversity that exists in Syria. That harmony persisted even when sectarian conflict—fomented in part by Bashar al Assad and his father Hafez before him—overwhelmed Syria's neighbors in Lebanon and Iraq. But in Syria, a delicate ethnic and religious balance held.

Now, however, it is becoming increasingly clear that Assad believes his best hope lies in shattering that harmony. He hopes that the atrocities committed by the shabiha, paramilitary gangs mostly drawn from Assad's own Alawite community, will implicate all of Syria's 2.3 million Alawites and bind their future to his.

This horrific strategy was recently employed on May 2 in the small, coastal village of Bayda. Assad's soldiers, accompanied by elements of shabiha, entered the mainly Sunni town and slaughtered scores of men, women and children.

By carrying out massacres like the one in Bayda, the regime hopes that Alawites, as well as other minorities seen as dependent on Assad's protection, will be inexorably tied to the regime. He hopes that his genocidal actions will lead to calls for revenge and, ultimately, to unbridled sectarian conflict. He will then claim to be the only power that can control the resulting chaos. This is the gamble of a desperate ruler, and we have to do what we can to frustrate his plan. In reality, those in Bashar al Assad's inner circle know he is steadily losing the support of Syria's people—including Alawites. We should encourage the opposition to accelerate that trend, and reach out to Syria's people with a vision of unity, peace and citizenship for all.

That is why I am introducing a resolution today calling on the Syrian Opposition Coalition to publicly outline a detailed vision of inclusion for all of Syria's people, including a guarantee that all Syrians—Alawites and others, will participate as equals in any new Syrian government. Such a statement, along with meaningful progress towards establishing institutions of transitional justice, will instill con-

fidence among Syria's minorities, and help peel more Syrians away from the regime.

This revolution started as a peaceful and inclusive movement calling for an end to the undemocratic and corrupt system of government controlled by Assad. That is why many Alawites are already participating in the opposition. They can see a better future for Syria. We should encourage the opposition to make concrete that pluralistic, democratic vision.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION
SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND
IDEALS OF NATIONAL ASIAN
AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HIV/
AIDS AWARENESS DAY

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 17, 2013

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I have reintroduced a resolution to honor the memory of 3,542 Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders we have lost to AIDS, and to recognize the 9,317 whom are still living with HIV/AIDS the United States. It supports the goals and ideals of National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, its observance, and, draws attention to the stigma and disparities that hinder proper treatment and prevention within these communities.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders comprise more than 40 different ethnic subgroups, speaking more than 100 languages and dialects. This resolution recognizes the importance of providing access to culturally- and linguistically- competent services, especially HIV testing. According to an analysis of data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders were the only racial/ethnic groups with a statistically significant increase in new HIV diagnoses. The CDC estimates that 37 percent of the HIV diagnoses among these communities progress to AIDS in less than 12 months. Additionally, the CDC estimates that 1 in 3 Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders living with HIV/AIDS are unaware they are infected.

Yet, with increasing rates of infection, they continue to have the lowest rates of access to HIV-testing services. Although there are a number of factors that contribute to increasing rates of infections, stigma and discrimination associated with an HIV/AIDS has proved to be a leading factor in low testing rates and increased risk-taking behaviors.

The observance of National Asian and Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day was established by the Banyan Tree Project, and began as a national campaign to raise awareness of the impact of the HIV/AIDS-related stigma and how it contributes to lower testing rates and greater risk-taking behaviors. Additionally, the work continues with the Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum who have worked nationally for more than 20 years, including in my home district of Guam, in helping to strengthen community-based organizations and programs responding to HIV/AIDS among Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in addressing this need and advancing the

larger cause of reducing HIV/AIDS-related stigmas and disparities in access to HIV prevention, testing and treatment. I would like to thank my colleagues, Congressman BERA, Congresswoman CHRISTENSEN, Congresswoman CHU, Congressman FALEOMAVAEGA, Congressman GRIJALVA, Congressman HIMES, Congresswoman LEE, Congressman LOWENTHAL, Congresswoman MCCOLLUM, Congressman SCOTT PETERS, Congressman PIERLUISI, Congressman RANGEL, Congressman SABLAN, Congressman ADAM SMITH, Congresswoman SPEIER, and Congressman TAKANO, for their support as original co-sponsors of this resolution.

TRIBUTE TO HOWARD BROOKS

HON. JON RUNYAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 17, 2013

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a true American hero, Mr. Howard Brooks. Mr. Brooks is a constituent of New Jersey's Third Congressional District, and I thank him for his courageous and dedicated service to our nation.

Howard Brooks, born and raised in Eastern Tennessee, joined the Navy on September 3, 1939, the very same day Hitler invaded Poland. Mr. Brooks was serving as a 3rd class electrician's mate on the heavy cruiser USS *Houston* when it was sunk by a Japanese battle fleet in the Battle of Sunda Strait.

After receiving orders to abandon ship, he spent three days in the water before his life raft washed ashore, where he and fellow survivors were captured by the Japanese. Mr. Brooks spent 3½ years as a prisoner of war, and was among those forced to build the Burma Railway. Of the 1,068 crewmen, he was among just 291 sailors who survived the sinking of the USS *Houston* and the years of brutal captivity that followed.

After the war ended and Mr. Brooks returned home, he graduated from the University of Rhode Island in 1952. He retired from his career as an electrical engineer in 1981. He has been married for over forty years, and has two sons. Just last year, on the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the USS *Houston*, Mr. Brooks attended a memorial service in Sam Houston Park, Houston, Texas.

At 93 years old, Mr. Howard Brooks continues to serve our nation by sharing his life's story, and ensuring that this time in our country's history is never forgotten. His valiant and courageous service to our country deserves our nation's deepest gratitude.

It is my honor to represent Mr. Howard Brooks in the House of Representatives. It is an even greater honor to have this opportunity to publicly thank him for his dedicated and courageous service to our nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 17, 2013

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall No. 152 and No.